

SCR CHAPTER 31

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

SCR 31.01 Definitions.

In this chapter:

- (1) "Board" means the board of bar examiners.
- (2) "Committee" means a panel comprised of at least 3 members of the board.
- (3) (Repealed)
- (4) "Hour" means a period of approved continuing legal education consisting of not less than 50 minutes.
- (5) "Inactive member" means an inactive member of the state bar under SCR 10.03(3) and the bylaws of the state bar.
- (6) "Lawyer" means an active member of the state bar under SCR 10.03(3) and the bylaws of the state bar and includes an active member under suspension other than a person under a form of suspension that will terminate only on order of the court or a person suspended pursuant to SCR 31.10(1).
- (7) "Reporting period" means the two-year period ending December 31 during which a lawyer must satisfy the Wisconsin continuing legal education requirement of SCR 31.02. The reporting period for a lawyer is determined by the year of his or her admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin. The reporting period for a lawyer admitted in an even-numbered year shall end on December 31 of each even-numbered year; the reporting period for a lawyer admitted in an odd-numbered year shall end on December 31 of each odd-numbered year.
- (8) "State bar" means the state bar of Wisconsin.

SCR 31.02 Attendance requirement.

- (1) A lawyer shall attend a minimum of 30 hours of approved continuing legal education during each reporting period.
- (2) A lawyer shall attend a minimum of 3 of the 30 hours required under sub. (1) on the subject of legal ethics and professional responsibility in every reporting period.

SCR 31.03 Reporting requirement.

- (1) A written report under oath or affirmation designated CLE Form 1 shall be filed with the board by a lawyer on or before the last day

of the reporting period. The written report shall establish compliance with the attendance requirement of SCR 31.02.

(2) A lawyer who has not satisfied SCR 31.02 and completed the reporting requirement under sub. (1) by the close of business on the February 1 following the last day of the reporting period shall be assessed a late fee of \$50.

SCR 31.04 Exemptions.

(1) A lawyer is exempt from the attendance and reporting requirements of this chapter in the year of his or her admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin.

(2) A lawyer who does not engage in the practice of law in Wisconsin at any time during the reporting period is exempt from the attendance requirement of SCR 31.02 but shall comply with the reporting requirement of SCR 31.03.

SCR 31.05 Approved hours.

(1) Only activities approved by the board may be used to satisfy the requirement of SCR 31.02.

(2)(a) Up to 15 hours of approved continuing legal education may be carried forward to the next reporting period if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The CLE Form 1 reflecting the hours that are to be carried forward is filed by the close of business on the February 1 following the last day of the reporting period.

2. The hours that are to be carried forward reflect attendance during the reporting period covered by the CLE Form 1.

3. The hours that are to be carried forward reflect attendance at courses that are approved by the Board at the time that the CLE Form 1 is filed.

(b) Courses that are approved by the Board subsequent to the time that the CLE Form 1 is filed may not be used for carry-over.

(c) Continuing legal education approved by the board for legal ethics and professional responsibility may not be carried forward under this subsection for the purpose of fulfilling the legal ethics and professional responsibility requirement of SCR 31.02(2) but may be carried forward under par. (a), subject to par. (b).

(3) Teaching an approved continuing legal or judicial education activity or teaching a course in a law school approved by the American bar association may be used to satisfy the requirement of SCR 31.02. The board shall award 2 hours for each hour of presentation of the

approved continuing legal or judicial education activity and one hour for each hour of presentation for teaching a course in a law school.

(4) Participation in an educational activity approved by the judicial education committee may be used to satisfy the requirement of SCR 31.02.

SCR 31.06 Attendance and reporting requirements for persons upon reactivation or reinstatement.

The board shall determine the attendance and reporting requirements for a person who seeks to change from inactive to active membership in the state bar or for a person who seeks reinstatement following voluntary resignation from the state bar, license suspension that will terminate only on order of the court, or license revocation.

SCR 31.07 Standards for approval of continuing legal education activities.

(1) The board shall designate the number of hours applicable to the requirement of SCR 31.02 for each approved continuing legal education activity.

(2) The following standards shall govern the approval of continuing legal education activities by the board:

(a) The primary objective of any continuing legal education activity shall be to increase the attendee's professional competence as a lawyer.

(b) The continuing legal education activity shall deal primarily with matters related to the practice of law, professional responsibility or ethical obligations of lawyers.

(c) A mechanically or electronically recorded activity will be approved only if a qualified instructor is available to comment and answer questions.

(d) Continuing legal education materials shall be prepared and activities conducted by an individual or group qualified by practical or academic experience.

(e) Continuing legal education activities shall be accompanied by thorough, well-organized and readable written materials which are available to attendees at the time of presentation unless otherwise permitted by the board.

(f) The board may grant approval of an activity to an individual lawyer, although the activity itself does not satisfy SCR 31.07(2)(a) and (b), where the lawyer demonstrates to the satisfaction of the board the manner in which the activity increases his or her competence as a

lawyer.

(3) The board may approve published legal writings for use toward the continuing legal education requirement under rules it may adopt.

(4) An activity sponsored by a private law firm, corporate law department or federal, state or local government agency offered for lawyers connected with it may be approved if it meets the requirements set forth in sub. (2).

(5) The board shall not approve any continuing legal education for legal ethics and professional responsibility credit unless that education has a minimum component of at least one continuous hour devoted to legal ethics and professional responsibility.

SCR 31.08 Procedure for approval of continuing legal education activities.

(1) Any person desiring approval of a continuing legal education activity shall submit all information required by the board.

(2) Following the presentation of an approved continuing legal education activity, each sponsor shall promptly transmit to the board a list of all lawyers in attendance.

(3) The board may annually extend approval to a sponsor for all its activities which conform to SCR 31.07. An organization which desires the general program approval shall submit all information required by the board.

SCR 31.09 Delegation, determinations and review.

(1) The board may delegate the authority of the board under this chapter to a committee, to a member or to the staff of the board.

(2) The board or its delegate shall, in response to written requests for approval of courses, waivers, extensions of time or interpretation of this chapter, make a written response giving appropriate reasons for the determination within a reasonable time.

(3) The board may review any action taken under this chapter at the written request of a lawyer or sponsor adversely affected by the action. Any request for review shall be made within 60 days after notice of the action taken has been sent by mail to the lawyer or sponsor.

SCR 31.10 Noncompliance.

(1) If a lawyer fails to comply with the attendance requirement of SCR 31.02, fails to comply with the reporting requirement of SCR 31.03(1), or fails to pay the late fee under SCR 31.03(2), the board shall serve a notice of noncompliance on the lawyer. This notice shall advise

the lawyer that the state bar membership of the lawyer shall be automatically suspended for failing to file evidence of compliance or to pay the late fee within 60 days after service of the notice. The board shall certify the names of all lawyers so suspended under this rule to the clerk of the supreme court and to each judge of a court of record in this state. A lawyer shall not engage in the practice of law in Wisconsin while his or her state bar membership is suspended under this rule.

(2) If the board believes that a false report has been filed, the board may refer the matter to the office of lawyer regulation.

SCR 31.11 Reinstatement.

(1) Suspension of less than 3 consecutive years. (a) A lawyer whose suspension for noncompliance under SCR 31.10(1) has been for a period of less than 3 consecutive years may file a petition with the board for reinstatement to membership in the state bar. Payment in the amount of \$100.00 and any applicable late fee shall accompany the petition.

(b) Within 60 days after service of a petition for reinstatement, the board shall make a determination regarding compliance. If the board determines that the lawyer is in compliance with all requirements under this chapter, it shall reinstate the lawyer's membership in the state bar. The board shall certify the names of all lawyers so reinstated to the clerk of the supreme court.

(c) If the board denies a petition for reinstatement, the board shall serve a notice of denial on the lawyer. After denial, a hearing shall be held by the board only upon written petition of the lawyer made within 30 days of service of the notice of denial, which petition for hearing shall be served on the board. The board shall conduct the hearing within 60 days after service of the petition for hearing and shall make and serve its findings and recommendations on the lawyer within 60 days after the close of the hearing, and, if adverse to the lawyer, shall notify the supreme court of its action. If reinstatement is denied, the findings and recommendations of the board shall be reviewed by the supreme court only upon written petition by the lawyer filed within 30 days of the date of the action of the board.

(1m) Suspension of 3 or more consecutive years. (a) A lawyer whose suspension has been for a period of 3 or more consecutive years may file a petition for reinstatement with the supreme court and serve a copy on the board and the office of lawyer regulation. Separate payments in the amount of \$200 each shall be made to the

board of bar examiners and the office of lawyer regulation shall accompany the petition.

(b) Within 90 days after service of the petition, the board shall make a determination regarding compliance and file its finding with the supreme court.

(c) Within 90 days after service of the petition, the director of the office of lawyer regulation shall investigate the eligibility of the petitioner for reinstatement and file a response with the supreme court in support of or opposition to the petition.

(3) Petition for reinstatement. The petition for reinstatement shall state in detail the manner in which the lawyer has complied with all requirements under this chapter. Only verified attendance at sufficient hours of approved continuing legal education activities for the period of suspension shall be considered full compliance with the attendance requirements of this chapter.

(4) Disciplinary suspension. A lawyer suspended as a result of disciplinary action following referral under SCR 31.10(2) may petition the supreme court for reinstatement under SCR 22.28.

SCR 31.12 Extensions and waivers.

(1) The board may extend time deadlines for completion of attendance and reporting requirements in cases of hardship or for other compelling reasons.

(2) The board may waive attendance and reporting requirements where to do otherwise would work an injustice.

SCR 31.13 Service; filing.

(1) Service under this chapter means a communication made by certified mail and is complete upon mailing. Service on a lawyer is sufficient if addressed to the lawyer's address last listed with the state bar. Service on the board is sufficient if addressed to the board at its office.

(2) Filing of a report form or a petition is effective on the date the form or petition is received at the office of the board during regular business hours.

SCR 31.14 Rule-making authority.

The board may promulgate rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

Chapter repealed and recreated by S.Ct. Order July 1, 1986, effective January 1, 1987; May 10, 1988; January 1, 1989; October 17, 1990; January 1, 1991; February 1, 1991; October 24, 1991; December 10, 1992; November 18, 1994.

APPENDIX

Rules of the Board of Bar Examiners

CLE 1.01

For the purpose of administering SCR Chapter 31, the year of an attorney's admission to the State Bar of Wisconsin shall be the year carried on the computer records of the State Bar unless the lawyer notifies the Board in writing prior to the end of his or her first reporting period that the State Bar data is incorrect and attaches supporting documentation.

CLE 1.02

For the purpose of administering SCR Chapter 31, the minimum number of persons attending a course shall be two attendees and one moderator. Fewer than that number, and the course shall be deemed to be self-study and shall not be approved for continuing legal education credit.

CLE 3.01

For the purpose of administering SCR Chapter 31, the classification of State Bar of Wisconsin membership on the February 1 immediately following the end of the lawyer's reporting period will govern whether a report will be required. The Board will grant lawyers who change to inactive status after February 1 according to State Bar records a deferment of the 30 hours then due on receipt of a written request that is accompanied by the \$50.00 late fee then due and the written statement of the State Bar that the lawyer has in fact already converted his or her membership to inactive status. A request will be considered timely if received at the Board office by the close of business on the date that the lawyer's suspension is to go into effect pursuant to SCR 31.10(1); that is, the filing date established by that rule.

CLE 3.02

A late fee will be assessed for lawyers who report courses in satisfaction of one reporting period that were actually attended in the

next reporting period.

CLE 3.03

Where CLE Form 1 appears in SCR Chapter 31, it shall also include written amendments of a CLE Form 1 previously filed for the same reporting period. Such amendments are subject to the same deadlines as the CLE Form 1.

CLE 4.01

Although a lawyer is exempt from attendance or reporting in the calendar year during which his or her admission falls, the lawyer may report on the CLE Form 1 due at the end of the first full two-year reporting period any approved hours up to a maximum of 15 that were attended between the date of admission and the end of the calendar year in which his or her admission to the practice of law occurred. Hours carried in under this provision may not be used to satisfy the legal ethics and professional responsibility requirement in accordance with SCR 31.05(2)(c).

CLE 6.01

Compliance with continuing legal education make-up requirements shall be a prerequisite to reactivation of membership in the State Bar of Wisconsin.

CLE 7.01

The following nonacademic portions of the program may not be counted for credit: breaks, introductory remarks, keynote speeches and business meetings.

CLE 7.02

Credit hours shall be rounded down to the nearest whole or half hour. Hours of credit shall be determined by the following formula:

Total minutes minus nonacademic portions (breaks, introductory remarks, keynote speeches, business meetings) divided by 50 minutes equal the hours of CLE credit.

For every half-day of programming in excess of 120 minutes, a minimum of 15 minutes will be deducted as a break allowance for the purpose of calculating hours.

CLE 7.03

Approved hours merely reflect a maximum that may be earned through attendance. Only actual attendance by the lawyer may be used to satisfy the Wisconsin requirement.

CLE 7.04

Credit will not be allowed for any program which in its entirety lasts less than 50 minutes.

CLE 7.05

No continuing legal education activity that is offered in conjunction with a meal will be approved unless the meal portion is allocated no less than 30 minutes in duration and the education portion occupies a separate period lasting at least 50 minutes.

Only under unusual circumstances will credit in excess of 1.0 hour be extended to a continuing legal education activity offered in conjunction with a meal.

CLE 7.06

(1) A published legal writing is defined as material that satisfies all of the following criteria:

(a) It is in printed form as a book, a supplement or a pocket part to a book, or an article in a publication that is included in the *Index to Legal Periodicals*. For the purposes of this definition, systems manuals that are developed and offered for sale are deemed to be books;

(b) It is commercially available or distributed to at least 500 lawyers; and

(c) It satisfies the criteria set forth in SCR 31.07(2)(a) and (b) in that its objective is to increase the reader's professional competence as a lawyer, and in that its content must deal primarily with matters related to the practice of law, professional responsibility or ethical obligations of lawyers.

(2) Published legal writings specifically exclude the following:

(a) Compilations of materials written by others;

(b) Contributions to newsletters;

(c) Written materials that are developed and distributed at continuing legal education activities in accordance with SCR 31.07(2)(e).

CLE 7.07

In order to request approval for a published legal writing, a CLE Form 4 and a copy of the published legal writing must be submitted by its author to the Board.

CLE 7.08

A lawyer may claim his or her actual preparation time up to a maximum of 15 hours for any approved published legal writing.

CLE 7.09

A lawyer may not claim in excess of 15 hours for all approved published legal writings in any one reporting period.

CLE 7.10

The only reporting period in which hours for an approved published legal writing may be claimed is that in which the writing was published.

CLE 8.01

Approval may be refused to a sponsor for any course which has previously been falsely advertised as approved by the Board of Bar Examiners.

CLE 8.02

General program sponsorship does not extend to activities in which the sponsor acts as the co-sponsor of an activity. Approval shall be sought by letter from the general program sponsor to the Board.

CLE 8.03

Any sponsor holding general program approval that fails to cooperate with the administrative requirements developed by the Director may have its general program approval revoked by the Board.

CLE 8.04

A CLE Form 2 shall be submitted to the Board to initiate a request for course approval. The Board will accept a uniform national course approval request form at the discretion of its Director.

CLE 8.05

A CLE Form 5, or a CLE Form 2, shall be submitted to initiate a request for legal ethics and professional responsibility approval. The Board will accept a uniform national course approval request form at the discretion of its Director.

CLE 11.02

Petitions for reinstatement pursuant to SCR 31.11(1)(a) must be executed under oath or affirmation.

CLE 11.03

The number of hours required of a lawyer seeking reinstatement is 30 per reporting period up to a maximum of 90; in addition, the lawyer will be required to meet the requirement for the reporting period in which his or her reinstatement falls.

CLE 11.04

The Board will accept the election of the SCR 31.04(2) exemption, if appropriate, in satisfaction of its requirement for reinstatement only for the reporting period from which the suspension arose; that is, the exemption may not be used toward reinstatement for any reporting period subsequent to the reporting period from which the suspension arose.

CLE 12.01

The Board will grant extensions for completion of attendance and reporting requirements only on a written request by the lawyer that is received prior to the end of the reporting period for which the lawyer is requesting an extension.

CLE 13.01

The Board will not accept facsimile transmissions in satisfaction of its filing requirements.

Adopted December 12, 1986, by the Board of Attorneys Professional Competence; amended July 8, 1988; December 9, 1988; March 23, 1990; September 21, 1990; March 22, 1991; December 12, 1991; May 14, 1992; May 3, 1994; August 25, 1994; November 14, 2001; January 23, 2002, August 17, 2004.